

voted to go into this war. But many of them are saying to us today, if they had known then what they know now, they never would have taken that vote to send our troops into that war.

Of course, we don't have to say it, but we must remind people over and over again, there were no weapons of mass destruction. There was no reason for us to go into Iraq. We have destabilized Iraq. We are destabilizing the entire Middle East, and we cannot win with this strategy that the President has employed.

And I would simply say to my colleagues, please do everything you can to help get us out.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker. Last night I watched the State of the Union Address in this hall for the first time as a Member of Congress. While I found the pageantry inspiring, I wish I could say the same about the speech itself.

We heard another attempt to allay with hollow rhetoric the concerns of an alarmed Nation about the war in Iraq. And rather than seizing an opportunity to level with the American people and set the new course they rightly demand, the administration, once again, chose to cling to its delusions and insist that its failing policies be enacted.

In 2003, the administration requested and received from Congress authority to invade Iraq on the basis of the claim that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and presented an imminent threat to our national security. Senior administration officials claimed that the Iraqi Government was connected with the al Qaeda terrorists who perpetrated the attacks of September 11, 2001. And we now know that neither the

premise for the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq nor the claim of a connection to 9/11 was true.

After the fall of Baghdad, the administration sent in officials with little or no knowledge and understanding of Iraq, its people, its culture or its politics. Costly mistakes, including the dismantling of the army and the failure to secure weapons stockpiles, paved the way for the current situation in Iraq: More than \$450 billion spent with billions unaccounted for; an undependable Iraqi Government, unwilling or incapable of controlling warring sects in their militias; more than 3,000 American deaths, and more than 25,000 soldiers maimed or grievously wounded; hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians killed, wounded or driven from their homes by sectarian violence; and a profound loss of respect for our country in the region and around the world.

All in all, it constitutes an unparalleled foreign policy disaster for the United States.

The administration still has no plans for a responsible exit strategy to protect our security. And unbelievably, the administration wants to send an additional 21,000 troops to Iraq.

The proposal is a cavalier rejection of the sound views of the American people, the consensus of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, and the counsel of wise military commanders.

In a city of some 7 million people, and without a unified government or the infrastructure to provide jobs to an ever more agitated population, an injection of 20,000 troops will not succeed. It can only stoke the flames of chaos and bloodshed in Iraq.

Our national strategic interests, Mr. Speaker, require a change of course, not an escalation. The imperative to support our troops requires a change of course, not an escalation.

Last year the Republican-controlled House declared in the defense authorization bill that 2006 would be a year of transition to Iraqi control of Iraq, and that redeployment would begin at that point. Yet here we are in 2007 with the administration calling for an escalation supported by many in this body.

In my judgment, Mr. Speaker, the time has come and gone for this Congress to say "enough is enough." The time has come and gone for statements of concern. The time has come and gone for "trust but verify." The situation in Iraq is dire.

It is now time for this Congress to do what the American people said so clearly in November that they wanted us to do: Change the course in Iraq. We have a saying in my home State in New Hampshire, "When you're in a hole, stop digging."

Mr. Speaker, I support our valiant troops, and I oppose the administration's proposed escalation. I resolve to work with my colleagues over the coming weeks for a concrete new direction in Iraq. In the absence of an acceptable plan from the President, the American people are calling upon Congress to

lead the way. Popular demand for new direction in Iraq is, in large part, the reason I am here in Washington and the reason Democrats now hold the majority.

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We can no longer accept empty promises from the administration or hope the administration will honestly confront the reality of its failures. The American people are looking to this Congress for leadership. They are impatient. And we must and we will respond.

CONGRESS SHOULD DUST OFF OVERSIGHT PLAN FROM 30 YEARS AGO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, in December 2005, we learned that the Bush administration was using the National Security Agency, the NSA, to eavesdrop on Americans on U.S. soil without a warrant or judicial oversight, in violation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Over a year later, Congress has yet to address this issue, and the NSA's secret surveillance program has continued unabated. Just last week the administration continued its unilateral approach, announcing that notwithstanding its protestations last year, that it could not possibly allow the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to oversee the NSA program; it would now submit to the court's jurisdiction, but not tell the Congress how the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court would oversee the program or why its policies have changed.

When Members of Congress questioned the Attorney General and the National Intelligence Director regarding this shift in policy, both officials refused to provide information regarding the nature of the administration's new policy in this area.

Indeed, we have no idea whether the administration is now seeking warrants on an individualized basis or broad programmatic approval from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.

Congressional silence in this area and others has had other repercussions. Earlier this month Congress was again caught by surprise when we learned that the President has claimed potentially sweeping new powers to open Americans' mail without a court warrant.

Again, the administration could obtain a warrant, and quickly, from a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court judge, but has chosen not to submit this effort to court supervision. Interestingly, the developments over the last year bear a striking resemblance to events that occurred some 30 years ago, when a series of troubling reports